



TILE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

for research and preservation of ceramic surfaces

January 2, 1995

Mrs. Mary George
Cultural Heritage Commission
433 S. Spring Street, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Dear Mrs. George:

It was a pleasure for both Sheila Menzies and myself to meet you and your fellow commissioners and to join you in visiting Finney's Cafeteria (what we know as "The Chocolate Shop") on December 21st. I must apologize for not coming to your meeting better prepared. Had I known that any of the commissioners were unfamiliar with Finney's and its historic importance, I could have brought with me a portfolio on the building for each of you to review. I am hoping now that I am not too late.

Decorative tile installations represent an art form that has only recently been recognized for its historic importance in the United States. Whether on the exterior or interior of a building, ceramic surfaces of today are not unlike the cave paintings of ancient times. They serve as reflections of an era and demonstrate the creativity of an artistic community. Permanently fired into clay, they represent a means by which people have chosen to conceptualize themselves and to inspire others for many years to come.

The tile installation at Finney's is totally unique, designed and produced in 1914 in a small factory called Batchelder & Brown in Pasadena specifically for that site. This was the single most important commission for Ernest A. Batchelder, then only recently retired as director of art at Throop Polytechnic Institute. This installation propelled him into the forefront of architectural ceramic design in Southern California, a position he never relinquished until his company succumbed to the Depression in 1932.

Ernest Batchelder is recognized internationally for his achievements in ceramic design and installation. Without question, he is among only a handful of American craftsmen to have achieved such prominence during his lifetime. His tiles and pottery are coveted by collectors today; he is revered as one of the founders of

the Arts and Crafts Movement in America. Finney's is the first of his major architectural installations, comparable only to the lobby of the Fine Arts Building on West 7th Street, completed eleven years later. These two installations are the only two that are extant in Los Angeles, and there are only two others of comparable stature extant in the U.S. and Canada. The historic importance of Finney's cannot be overstated.

A word about an assertion you may have heard Mr. Kenneth Aslan, the owner's representative, make while we were with him at Finney's. He claimed that he was losing business, that vendors had dropped their leases at the end of November, because they were not pleased with the surroundings at Finney's. He took us to the jewelry mart down the street to show us an example of what commerce should be like at Finney's providing the space was not so highly regulated. You may recall that quite a number of the shops at Finney's, including the one he ordered dismantled for us, were closed. However, Sheila and I returned to Finney's by ourselves later that afternoon and, to our surprise, we found all of the shops open, including the earlier dismantled one, and business was thriving. I felt we had been taken for "a ride."

On behalf of the members of the Tile Heritage Foundation, I urge the commission to recognize the significance of Finney's as a historic-cultural monument and recommend that the alterations be reversed so as to avoid further damage to the tiled walls and ceiling in accordance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The means are available today to professionally repair the damage that has occurred.

If there is any additional information I can provide or if there is anything that I can do personally to assist in this endeavor, please let me know. I am willing to meet with you in Los Angeles at any time.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph A. Taylor
President



FRIENDS OF TERRA COTTA

November 10, 1994

Ms. Mary George, President
Cultural Heritage Commission
433 S. Spring Street, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Dear Ms. George:

As President of the Friends of Terra Cotta, I urge the Cultural Heritage Commission to recommend (and enforce to the best of your legal abilities) that the alterations be reversed on the Chocolate Shop interior at 217 West 6th Street. On my last trip to Los Angeles, in March 1990, I visited this site. At the time, an audio-electronics supply store occupied it. I had the opportunity, amidst piles of boxes, to see the wonderful Batchelder tiles. The owners then were very proud of the tile decor which they thought had been imported from Europe. They seemed rather disbelieving that a local tilemaker was responsible for the work!

Batchelder's work is widely recognized by ceramicists, historians, architects and collectors (the prices are staggering) throughout the United States. In New York we have numerous floors, apartment house lobbies, and swimming pools ornamented with Batchelder tile. As I travel around the country I am always pleased to find Batchelder tiles -- including those I saw on recent trips to Detroit and Cincinnati.

The Friends of Terra Cotta, a national preservation organization founded in 1981, has worked very hard to save ceramic surfaces in architectural settings. We are aware of the difficulties involved, especially in protecting interiors. After a great deal of advocacy work, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission recently designated the Rookwood and Guastavino tiled interior of the former Della Robbia Bar at 4 Park Avenue, NYC. Built in 1912, just two years before the Chocolate Shop, this is one of the few remaining tile interiors from a period of great popularity for terra cotta and tile. (See enclosed post card.)

We hope that you will be able to protect the Chocolate Shop -- it is especially important as interest in architectural ceramics continues to grow. We are very pleased that the tiled pyramid-shaped roof of the Los Angeles Country Library was recently restored and, in addition, that the terra cotta arm and torch at its pinnacle were replaced. (Our most recent Friends of Terra Cotta mailing included a survey of the restoration aspects of this large project.) Don't let this preservation success be overshadowed by serious damage to another historically significant site, the Chocolate Shop.

Sincerely,

Susan Tunick

Susan Tunick
President
Friends of Terra Cotta

cc: Mr. Jay Oren
Mr. Al Nodal

Friends of Terra Cotta/New York State
c/o Tunick, 771 West End Avenue 10E

The Chocolate Shop at Los Angeles

PLUMMER AND FEIL, ARCHITECTS

By PETER B. WIGHT, F. A. I. A.

A traveler on the Pacific Coast can not fail to be impressed with the evident aim of business men, especially retailers and those who cater to the personal wants of customers, to give an artistic air to their shops and stores. They have even gone so far as to provide special costumes and variations from the vernacular for their employees. This, especially in Los Angeles, bespeaks the cosmopolitan character of the population.

Naturally some of these efforts are misdirected and often ridiculous; but in the main they have been very successful. In Los Angeles the fitting up and decoration of some of the shops has involved great expense, for in some of them there are galleries of painting and sculpture that vie with many of the private collections on the coast. Here there is a chain of chocolate shops treated in different styles, one of which is most appropriately decorated in the Dutch manner.

For this purpose an old building was taken and the first story entirely remodeled. In fact it was rebuilt, leaving only the supports for the upper floors. It being a double building with a row of columns in the center, one-half of the width at the front was given only to the entrance shop where counters were required, and the rear part, with columns in the center, was fitted up as a lunch room with table service.

The architects, Plummer and Feil, of Los Angeles, designed the whole interior as if it were an independent structure. The entire rear part was built around the interior columns and from piers against the outer walls, with groined arches of reinforced concrete. No windows were provided, and the whole was arranged for artificial lighting and ventilation, the impression to be produced being that a visitor should feel as far as possible as if in a foreign country—in Holland. The entire interior detail design and setting was intrusted to Ernest A. Batchelder, of Pasadena, who drew the cartoons, made all the tiles and terra cotta ornamentation at his studio at Pasadena, and carried out the installation in the building.

He had the necessary preparation, having made extensive sketches in Holland and Belgium, which, with his experience in clay modeling and tile making, enabled him to carry out the whole scheme successfully.

The illustrations give examples of various parts of this remarkable interior. Figure 1 is a view of the shop in the front part as seen by one entering from

the street. The three remaining views give examples of the decorated wall panels, of which there are about nine hundred superficial feet altogether.

The subject of one wall panel was suggested by a sketch of Maestricht, made by Mr. Batchelder, with foreground additions from other sketches. Another shows three panels, decorated with fragments from three sketches made in Holland. The two outside panels are to the same scale. The panel over the door is purposely made to a smaller scale to show that the three pictures are not connected. The fourth shows the water gate at Hooen. It will be noted that the larger pictures show a river in the foreground, and the horizontal line is thus preserved to give an effect of unity to all of them. Beneath each panel is a row of quaint fruit and bird tiles. The panels have a rich luminous effect of color and give the necessary contrast to the larger area of plain tiles.

The panel tiles are modeled in low relief which emphasizes the outlines of the figures and all are colored as well. These distinctions can not be shown truly in pictures made from photographs, but in reality this effect is brought out by the electric lighting of the room; or was before they were re-colored by some one who had nothing to do with their execution. Fortunately these illustrations show them as originally made, and are from photographs taken before the lighting was changed. The pictorial tiles were made with a semi-glaze, which took the light better where relief was introduced.

The preservation of the unity of these large pictorial designs which had to go through so many processes before completion, was so important and necessary that it will be interesting to know how it was done. We therefore asked Mr. Batchelder if he would reveal the process, and he has kindly given the following description.

"The composition, of course, was the first thought. In working out these schemes we made our composition to a small scale, in charcoal, in order to get the massing and space breaking, utilizing for local details all the data that we could get hold of. Having established the scheme on a small scale we then erected a long board in the studio, which enabled us to keep two full-sized cartoons going at once. These cartoons were made plus shrinkage, and were worked up in charcoal and colored crayons with such changes as were necessary in the full size enlargements from the

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ENTERPRISE

(Continued from page 7)

a tunnel kiln of the latest type, where the temperatures would reach 2100° F. Every twenty-four hours six tons of tile moved along this circuit. With the help of the "perpetual card inventory," the tiles were assembled once again after firing, checked for quality, and then routed to the shipping room where they were packed and shipped directly to the job site or to showrooms in San Francisco, Portland, New York, Houston or Chicago.

The manufacturing process from beginning to end preserved the lively and unique appearance of each individual tile. Every step along the way was simple but crucial, and every worker was involved in critical decisions. Each Batchelder tile has a feeling of presence, immediacy and human contact.

Batchelder began producing tile in Pasadena in 1912 and at the height of demand employed 175 workers at the tile works on Artesian Street in Los Angeles. As production increased, Batchelder was determined that the spontaneity not be lost. One story claims that he hired one worker to slightly mar each tile so as to retain the look of the original handcrafted tile from the early days when tiles were laid out to dry in the garden in Pasadena and might be walked on by local chickens or cats.

The drastic effects of the Great Depression forced the closure of many tile works throughout the country. Batchelder discontinued operations in 1932. Both Ernest and his wife, Alice Coleman, a gifted concert pianist and founder of the Coleman Chamber Concerts, be-

came active in civic affairs in their beloved Pasadena. The two were honored in 1936 with the Arthur Noble Award for outstanding citizens. Their



Batchelder-Wilson tiles, circa 1925. Photo by Diane Winters.



Batchelder-Wilson, circa 1925. Notice the magnificent design of the center tile which carries the vines from one direction to the next.

Photo by Diane Winters



Batchelder-Wilson, circa 1928

Photo by Diane Winters

home on the Arroyo Seco, a fine Swiss chalet-style bungalow, contains sym-

bols of their marriage. Above the fireplace mantel, two of Batchelder's terra cotta lions, one on each side of the tiled facade, hold shields, each with a different symbol: a rabbit or hare for Ernest and a harp for Alice. Ernest continued his work in clay in 1936 producing Kinneloa pottery, a slip-cast whiteware glazed often in pastel colors. He sold the pottery in 1949 shortly after the death of his wife. Batchelder died at his home on August 6, 1957, at the age of 82.

Although Batchelder's last tiles were produced in the early 1930s, many remain to be seen and ad-

mired today in both residential and commercial installations. One of Batchelder's largest commissions was for the Chapel of our Lady of Victory at Saint Catherine's College in St. Paul, Minnesota (1924), where the walls, columns and corbels as well as the entire Campanile Entrance are tiled. The lobby of the Fine Arts Building on West 7th Street in Los Angeles, designed by Walker & Eisen in 1924, is another magnificent, and readily accessible, example as is the lobby of the Marine Building in Vancouver, British Columbia (1929). Other sites include the Christian Science Church in St. Petersburg, Florida; the Plaza Hotel in San Antonio, Texas; Lake Yellowstone Hotel in Yellowstone National Park; Union Station in Chicago; the Reading Public Museum in Reading, Pennsylvania; and the Arts Building at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

Batchelder referred to his tile operation as "a commendable bit of enterprise." "There is," he wrote, "a dignity to hand labor, a dignity of the mind and

heart, not of the hand alone."

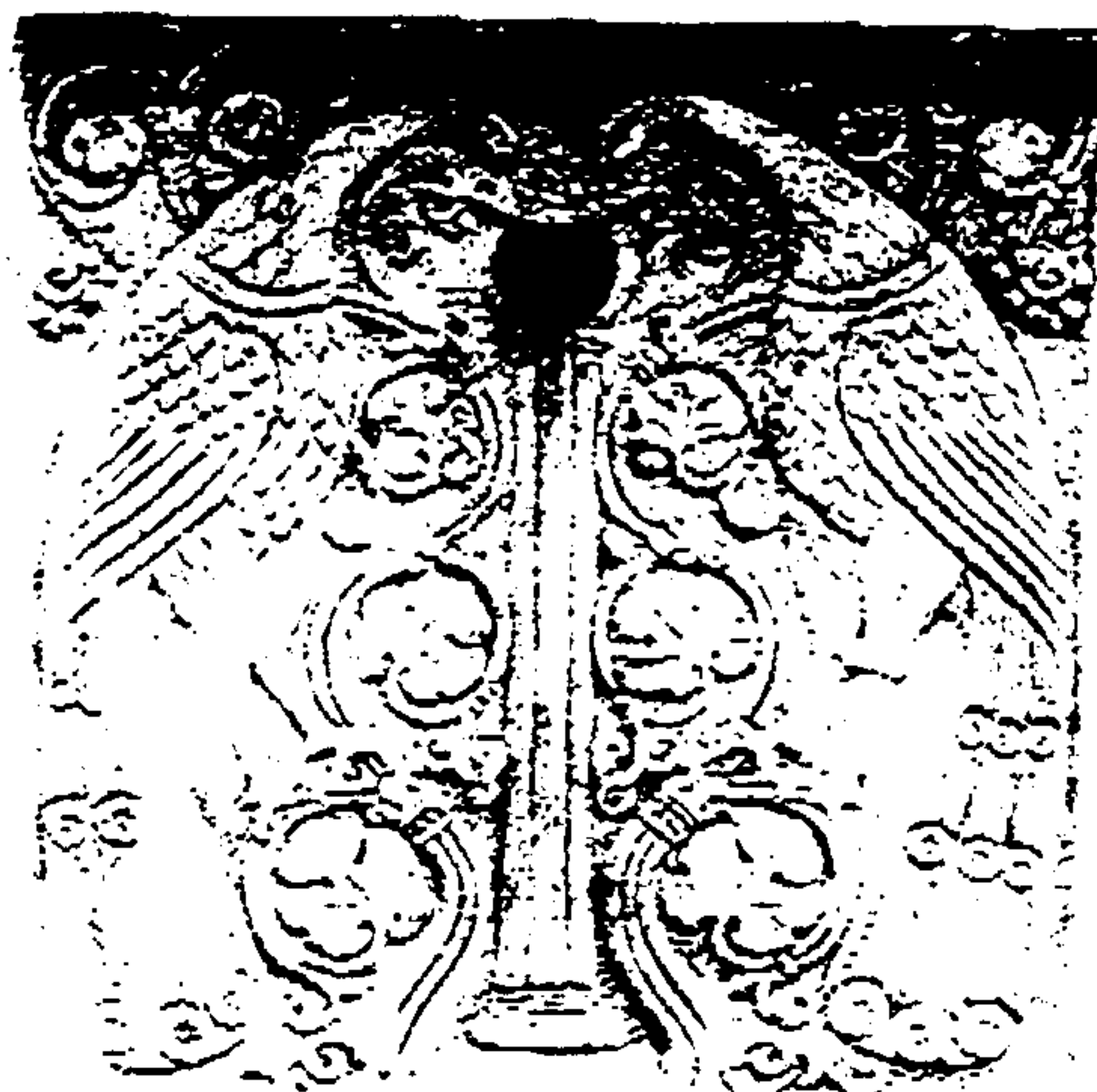
"A COMMENDABLE BIT OF ENTERPRISE"

ERNEST BATCHELDER: A MASTER OF THE CRAFT

by Marie Classe Tapp

Among the tiles produced during the Arts and Crafts period, the carved relief tiles of Ernest Batchelder, each handcrafted from local earthen materials, are a clear embodiment of the Arts and Crafts philosophy. Batchelder wrote of those ideals in his two books, *Principles of Design* (1908) and *Design in Theory and Practice* (1910), where he set out his precepts of ordered design: harmony, balance and rhythm. These precepts are seen in his choice and arrangement of subjects which were often drawn from themes of medieval heraldry including those favored by William Morris and his English cohorts: sunflowers, peacocks and Viking ships.

In his later writings, "A Little History of Batchelder Tiles" (1925) and "A Little [sic] Journey Through the Batchelder Factory" (circa 1925), the tile maker revealed his sense of humor and a keen sense of appreciation for his



Batchelder tile with a hole in it from which water drips.

Photo by Diane Winters.

staff. For Batchelder, clay was clay; the scale of the operation might change but the process and methods remained the same whether using one ton a month or six tons a day.

The Batchelder factory in Los Angeles which he describes with much pride was very well organized. The preparation process involved the drafting room where drawings of all the tile designs were created on paper and the laboratory where the qualities of all the materials were checked on delivery. There was the dust-filled mixing room where the roar of the pulverizing machines filled the air and the quieter order room where two people broke down each incoming order, recording the status of each tile in production with what was called the "perpetual card inventory."

The formation phase involved numerous stages. In the

modeling room, Mr. and Mrs. Ingels, Batchelder's master carvers in the mid-'20s, worked in wet clay, interpreting the sketched designs. Enlarged master tiles were made for each design, allowing for the clay's inevitable shrinkage, and these were sent to the casting department where a key mold was made from each master. The key molds, from which production molds were produced, were kept in a fireproof vault. Figures tiles, borders and corbels all required plaster molds.

All small forms and special features were made in the pressing room. The clay was compressed in a slab roller, cut to rough size and pressed into a mold by hand or with a simple lever press. Excess clay was wired off, and the fresh tile was flipped out of the mold onto a ware board. These boards were then loaded onto rail cars to begin

their journey through the drying rooms, some of which were over fifty feet long with from three to six compartments. The degree of heat increased gradually as the tiles slowly passed through the dryers.

As the dry tiles emerged, they were arranged by

orders in the green stock room. Still fragile in this unfired state, they were carefully stacked ready for glazing. At this point some tiles were bisque fired, glazed and then refired. Others were given an engobe finish in the green state and single fired. Figures tiles were brushed with Batchelder's blue slip (one of a handful of colors used) and topped with a muted hue. Finally, the endless chain of cars moved through "No. 11,"



The hare or rabbit was Batchelder's personal trademark.

Photo by Diane Winters



Wall fountain by Batchelder-Wilson, circa 1925.

Photo by Diane Winters

(Continued on page 14)

E.A.B.

(Continued from page 9)

sides of each tile, which assist tile setters in obtaining even grout joints throughout an installation. Ceramic mosaics were increasingly popular after the turn of the century but expensive to handle. Batchelder's solution was simply to scribe joints into a larger tile, so that when it was grouted it gave the impression of being made up of small tiles. Many of the figure tiles were conveniently produced in different sizes, a few from as large as 18" by 18" down to as small as 2" by 2". And although old patterns were never eliminated from the product line, more contemporary tile designs were added to keep current with what the market demanded.

In "A Little [sic] Journey through the Batchelder Factory" written in 1925, Batchelder asserted, "We have a reasonable pride in our plant as it stands today. It is a wholesome place in which to work—clean and well lighted." He noted that for inspiration a garden was planted outside, adjacent to the modeling room "where California flowers bloom the year through." Despite the size of the facilities and the many complexities that a large ceramic business must endure, Batchelder seemed to maintain a genuine appreciation for his workers and enough of a distance from the mundane

ing room; "A Pressing Engagement" for the press room; "A Few Dry Remarks" for the dry room; and, appropriately, "A Burning Subject" for the kilns.

There is no doubt that as his business grew and became more prosper-

Four years later, in 1936, at the age of 61, Batchelder was back into clay, this time literally making pots, a line of slip-cast bowls and vases called Kinneloa, which he sold successfully through department store chains. He prided himself in personally signing

most of the ware; and he intentionally kept the operation small to maintain a personal touch. When questioned by the *Pasadena Star News* in 1948 regarding his plans, Batchelder said, "That's the way I like it. I don't want to expand. I've been there before."

Ernest Allan Batchelder died in Pasadena in 1957 at the age of 82. His legacy in clay lives on.

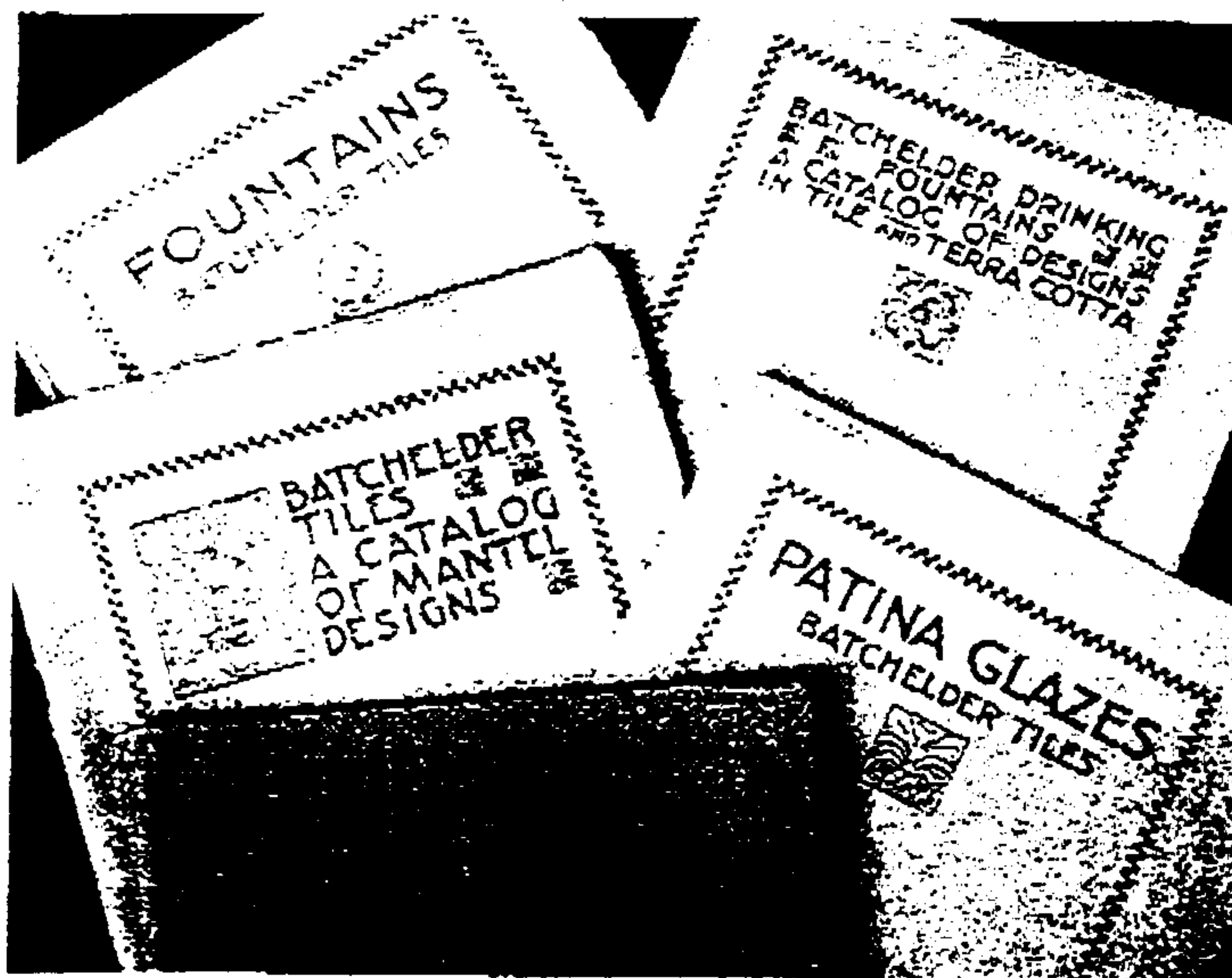
Author's note: Over the past twenty years or so, there have been numerous articles of varying length and sophistication written about Ernest Batchelder. Recently, considerable research has been undertaken by Robert Winter, Norman Karlson, Marie

Tapp, and no doubt others, which has put to rest many of the inaccuracies which have been perpetuated unwittingly. I have tried to present here the most updated and accurate information available. Questions will always persist, however, even a bit of controversy, but these simply provide grist for the historian's mill.

Acknowledgements: I am indebted to Robert Winter, architectural historian and Batchelder scholar, for so generously sharing the results of his many years of research. Winter's unpublished manuscript, "The Harp and the Harc," has been a continuing source of inspiration. I would like to thank Alan Coleman Batchelder for his reflections and insights and for sharing his research concerning the Batchelder family history. And to Paul Dobbs, archivist at the Massachusetts College of Art, for his assistance in uncovering the academic credentials of our illustrious tile maker.

Answers to the Historical Quiz:

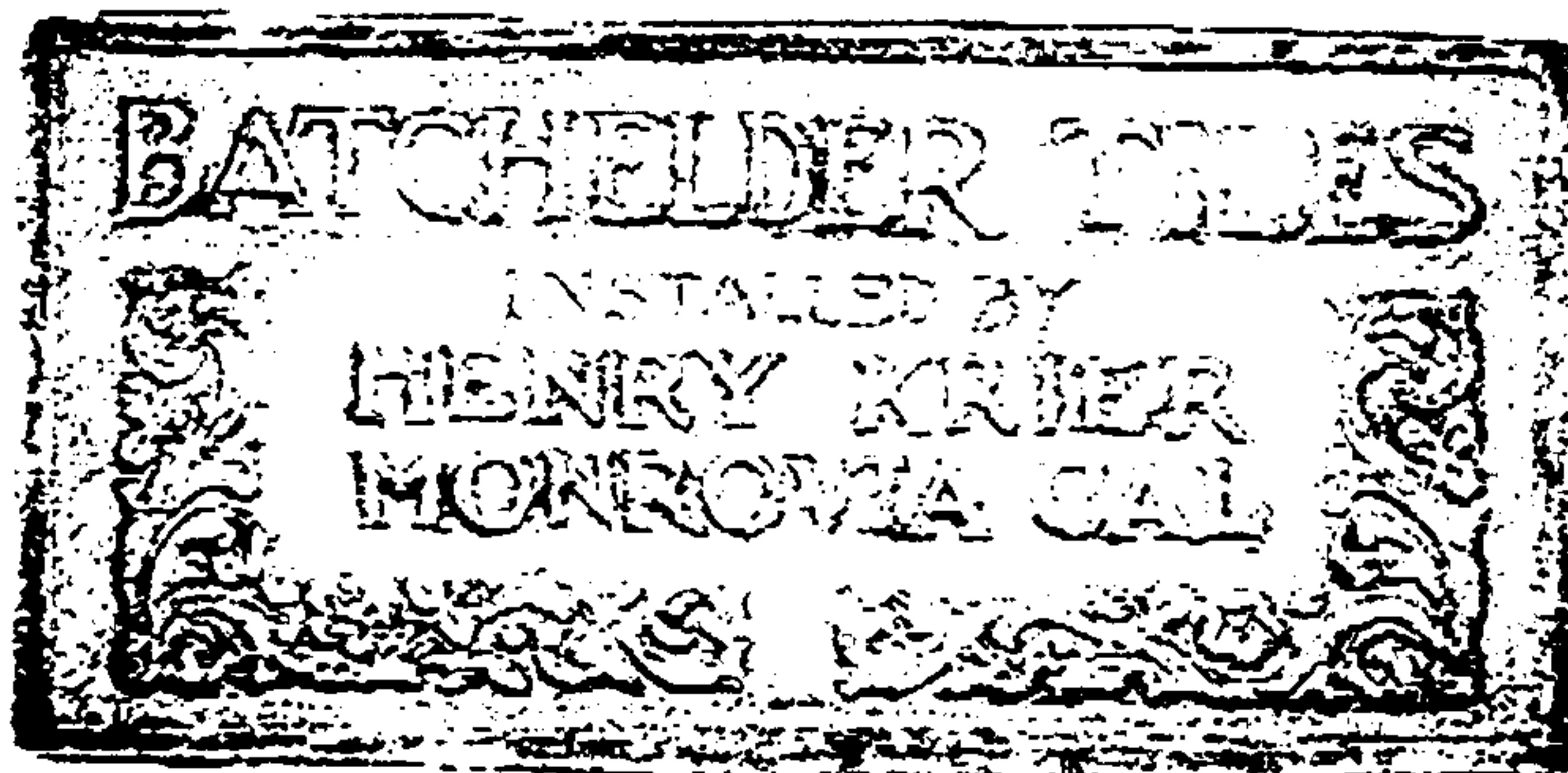
1. Spanish Colonial Revival.
2. *Cuerda seca* (dry-line); *cuenca* (raised-line).
3. American Encaustic Tiling Company (Vernon); California Clay Products Company (South Gate); Gladding, McBear & Co. (Glendale).
4. John Ivory; Brooklyn, New York.



Batchelder-Wilson catalogs published in the late 1920s.

Collection: Tile Heritage Foundation, Gift of Mrs. A.N. Woodbury.

ous, even before his move to Los Angeles in 1920, Ernest Batchelder had little if any contact with the clay itself. The "dignity to hand labor" which he wrote so eloquently about was left to others;



Batchelder-Wilson "signature" tile.

Kier Collection: Tile Heritage Foundation, Gift of Richard A. Bertha

his was "a dignity of the mind and heart." He was, after all, trained as a teacher and designer, a master of the craft turned entrepreneur.

Batchelder-Wilson was a victim of the Great Depression, closing its doors in 1932. The Pomona Tile Manufacturing Company sold off much of the inventory, and all that remained was later sold to the Bauer Pottery Company.

daily routine at the factory to sustain his sense of humor. He referred to his modeling room, for example, as a "veritable hatchery of ideas" and to his drying rooms as "Turkish baths." In his description of the facility, a tour to familiarize architects, installers and other customers with the production process, he chose a number of jocular headings: "The Die is Cast" to describe the cast-

Coleman in the summer of 1912, he remodeled the mantel in his living room, scattering among his own tiles Mercer's "Creation of Eve," the "Swan and Tower" and the "Knight of Margam." Years later in 1948 in an interview with the *Pasadena Star News*, Batchelder acknowledged being a Mercer disciple:

The greatest of all American potters is the famous Mercer of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Mercer was 300 years out of his time, probably the only modern artist retaining the glorious touch of the medieval masters.

By 1912, as his neighbors were objecting to the "soot" generated by the backyard kiln and as the demand for his novel ceramic products had exceeded the capacity of his garden studio, Batchelder took on a partner, Frederick L. Brown, and established a small factory at 769 South Broadway in Pasadena "down among the gas tanks in a galvanized shed in regions remote from neighborly solitude." From forty six-inch tiles per fire, the new kiln could handle 500. The tiles were initially dried in the sun. "We watched them—the tiles—as a cook watches a pancake on the griddle." When "artificial" drying became a logical preference, a room was formed with tarpaulins and was heated with a gas stove. Soon, with two additional kilns, the capacity reached 4000 tiles.

The new company, Batchelder & Brown, was quick to publish a catalog, the first of many to appear over the next twenty years. The message was simple, straightforward, delivered with a vibrance and pride which continues to resonate among craftsmen today:

Our tiles are hand wrought, by processes peculiar to our own factory. They have slight variations of shape and size—just sufficient to relieve the monotony of machine pressed tiles. These variations are not sought; they are desirable and inevitable in a hand made product. We make the very best tile we can possibly make by hand.

The colors were "like those of old Persian rugs" and were described as luminous, mellow and glowing. By using clay slips (engobes) the tones were intentionally muted, designed to enrich and blend harmoniously into the residential environment without



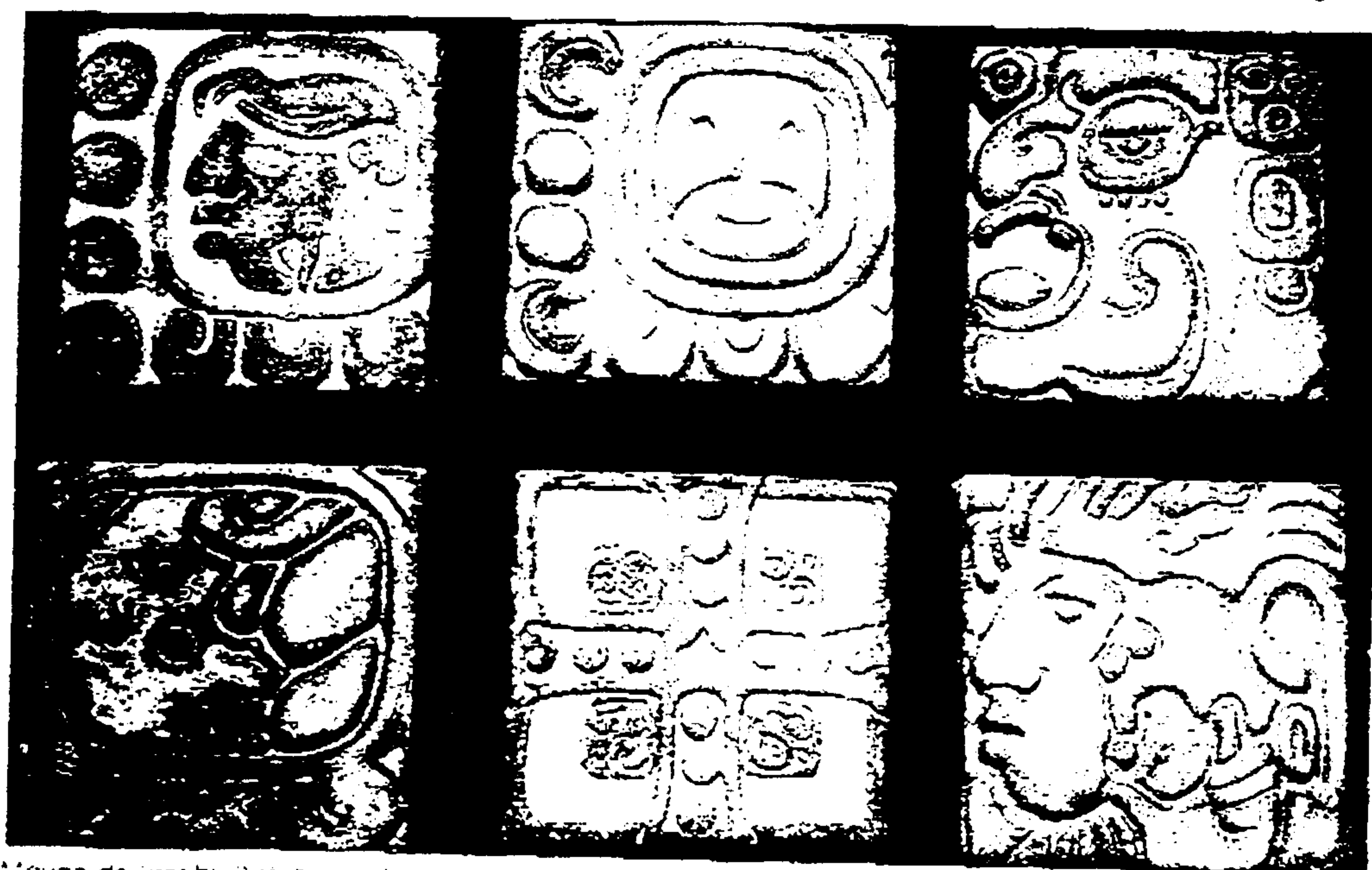
The Batchelder home overlooking the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena, California. Built in 1910. The first Batchelder tiles were made in a small garden studio behind the house, most likely in late 1910.

drawing undue attention. It would be nearly ten years before another company would try to imitate Batchelder's success, and by that time he had established a position of insurmountable prominence in the market.

1914 was a most significant year for Ernest Batchelder. Plummer and Feil, Architects, commissioned Batchelder & Brown to design and supply the tiles for The Chocolate Shop in downtown Los Angeles. The job, by far the largest to date, involved the tiling of the entire interior space—floors, walls and ceilings—and included a series of wall murals depicting scenes from Holland. On August 4th of that year, the Batchelders gave birth to their first and only child, Alan Coleman.

By 1920, the time had arrived to dramatically expand the manufacturing facility. A site was chosen in the 2600 block of Artesian Street in the Lincoln Heights area of Los Angeles, which

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Various designs by Batchelder & Brown, circa 1923.

Collection: The Heritage Foundation. Gift of Norman Karson.

BATCHELDER

(Continued from page 1)

to strike out on his own had arrived. On May 24, 1909, the *Pasadena Daily News* published an erroneous story claiming that Batchelder had located a magnanimous benefactor in the East and that upon his return to Pasadena from Minneapolis that fall he was intending to build the biggest art school in the country. Batchelder's response by letter to the newspaper is wonderfully revealing:

In the *News* of May 24 is such a glowing account of the school that I am planning to start in Pasadena next October that it really seems a shame to question your version of the matter. But considering the fact that I possess "inside information," I am led to suggest that your informant must have cultivated the imaginative faculty at the expense of accuracy. To my knowledge there is no man in Boston with \$100,000 to invest in the "biggest art school in the country," though indeed if it should appear that such has arrived in Pasadena unknown to me, please have someone sit on him until I can get home, for his presence would clear away a number of bothersome details.

And he went on to describe his actual intentions for the fall of 1909: to open what he called a "productive workshop" where works would be "executed in copper and silver, jewelry, enameling, leather and pottery... handwrought articles for purposes of home furnishing," but no mention of tiles per se.

That same year Batchelder purchased a piece of property overlooking the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena where he set about to construct a bungalow for himself. Using an illustration of the front of the house, he placed an ad in the *News* that appeared on September 26, 1909, promoting his "School of De-

sign and Handicraft," which was to open on November 15th of that year. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that his classes began in the garden behind the house at that time. It was the following November before he took out a permit to build a studio on the site, what he later termed the "birth-place" of Batchelder tile.

Batchelder's first tiles may have been produced as a result of his own immediate need in and around his new house. More likely, he may have agreed to attempt his first mantel for a client. His "A Little History of Batchelder Tiles," written in 1925, describes it this way:

Twelve years ago,* Batchelder tiles were made in a Pasadena garden under the shade of the olive trees. The clay was

brought home from a brickyard wrapped in gunny sacks, all mixed ready for use. In spite of its humble origin it possessed potential beauty when brought into contact with adequate ideas. We had those ideas and sought to give them expression.... It took three firings to satisfactorily produce our first mantel order. The mantel was laid out on the kitchen floor and personally delivered at the job because we had doubts as to the trustworthiness of expressmen— and, incidentally, feared the owner of the house might change his mind.

One thing is certain: Batchelder was highly impressed by the success of Henry Chapman Mercer, whose handcrafted Moravian tiles from Pennsylvania were revered by the proponents of Arts and Crafts in the East. In July of 1907 he ordered a variety of these tiles, presumably for his use in his design classes at Throop, and it is not surprising that he installed some of

them at his home. Mercer's "Peacock Panel" and "Birds of Tintern Abbey" were embedded in the stucco of the



Early tile by Batchelder & Brown, Pasadena, circa 1914. Collection: Ceramic Tile Institute.



Early tile by Batchelder & Brown, Pasadena, circa 1914.



Early tile by Batchelder & Brown, Pasadena, circa 1914. Collection: Ceramic Tile Institute.



Early tile by Batchelder & Brown, Pasadena, circa 1914. Collection: Ceramic Tile Institute.

* Batchelder was remembering incorrectly when he wrote this in 1925. It was actually fifteen years earlier, in 1910, when he was first making tiles in the garden behind his home. By 1912 he was in his first factory.

chimney outside; Mercer's "City and River" was integrated into the metalwork of the latch on his front door. In celebration of his marriage to Alice

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FLASH POINT

The Quarterly Bulletin of the Tile Heritage Foundation

\$5.00

ERNEST ALLAN BATCHELDER CRAFTSMAN TURNS ENTREPRENEUR

by Joseph A. Taylor

The history of an industry is often more entertaining to the writer than to the reader. It is like bringing out the family photograph album with the relatives in their Sunday clothes. We all have to start—somewhere and at some time.

These are the words of Ernest Allan Batchelder, written in 1925 at the height of his career as a tile manufacturer in Los Angeles. He was 50 years old.

Batchelder's "start" came on January 22, 1875, in Frankestown, New Hampshire, where nearly a century before his great-great-grandfather Amos had settled after being relieved of duty in the Revolutionary War. Ernest's early years were not easy ones. His mother died just before his fourth birthday, and he was eventually sent to live with his father's brother who was a strict disciplinarian. He later moved to the Boston area and in 1894 was admitted to the Massachusetts Normal Art School, a tuition-free teacher training



Ernest Allan Batchelder (1875-1957).

Courtesy of Robert W. Winter.

college, where he studied basic drawing instruction and was awarded a diploma in Class A in 1895. Four years later he received a diploma in Class B

(drawing, painting and design) and for Public School Class, which certified him to teach drawing in the Massachusetts school system. He then studied at the Harvard Summer School of Design under Denman Ross, a founding member of the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston and one of the most influential scholars of the period.

In 1901 Batchelder was offered a job as an instructor of manual arts at Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena, and as a result he moved to the West Coast. Between 1904 and 1909 he taught design classes intermittently at the Handicraft Guild in Minneapolis, and he made two trips to Europe during these years from which many of his designs and much of his inspiration were derived. His *Principles of Design* was published in 1908, and a series of his articles was appearing in *The Craftsman*, which would be published as *Design in Theory and Practice* in 1910. He was a popular teacher and a recognized authority on design.

By 1909, despite his position as Director of Art at Throop, Batchelder was frustrated with the policy changes taking place at the school; at 34, his time

(Continued on page 8)

Frederick C. Pierce's *Batchelder: Bachelor Craftsman*, published by W. B. Conkey, Nashua, New Hampshire, in 1898, traces the Batchelder ancestry back to Amos and beyond with all of the birth, death and marriage dates, occupations and places of residence. Interestingly Ernest's birthdate is given as June 22, 1875. This author, however, has relied for the birthdate from his Death Certificate.



It should be remembered that in the sixty years before World War II, nearly two hundred tile factories existed in the United States—a flourishing industry that made an outstanding contribution to the history, art and science of tilemaking. Country Floors recognizes the importance of saving our national ceramic tile treasure, and we are therefore grateful to the Tile Heritage Foundation for the leading role that it plays in this cause. Sponsoring *Flash Point* is our way of continuing to support the Foundation's vital efforts.

Country Floors specializes in handmade ceramic tiles and terra cottas from Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, England, Holland and the United States. Our tiles are available at over fifty branch stores and dealers throughout the United States, Canada and Australia.

Tile Heritage is pleased that our company, like Country Floors, have recognized the importance of the Foundation's educational efforts. We want to encourage other companies to join in this effort and please their support to ensure the continued quality of this publication. Call or write the Foundation for details.

THE WESTERN ARCHITECT

THE CHOCOLATE SHOP
OF LOS ANGELES

(Continued from Page 105)

smaller compositions. These cartoons were then traced, and further refinements were made in this way, and the tracings were then transferred to full sized slabs of moist clay. As the slabs were to be cut into smaller units we established lightly the cutting lines, and in transferring the designs to the clay made minor changes to accommodate these units. Each panel was then modeled in three general planes, glazed and fired, each unit being marked with a key in order that the panels might be properly assembled when ready for setting. We were not intent upon rendering the actual colors of Holland, but had in mind the application of the color scheme to a given problem.

"In cases when a definite bit of architecture has been followed I have found it almost always necessary to change the scheme about in order to keep the continuity throughout the panels. You will note, for example, the water line is in about the same relative place in each panel and approximately in the same balance with space and mass."

The result of this effort will compare well with other ceramic wall decorations that have been executed in eastern and middle states.

W. A. Schabel and A. J. Grimm announce the opening of an office for the practice of architecture at 335-6 Erie Building, Cleveland, Ohio.

William Koehl announces his association for the general practice of architecture, with Mr. Antonio DiNardo, formerly with Messrs. Hubbell & Benes, who has been associated with Arnold W. Brunner, of New York, and has held a professorship in architecture at Carnegie Institute of Technology. The new partnership will be known as Koehl and DiNardo, with offices in the Park Building, Cleveland, Ohio.

C. G. Lancaster, architect, 203 1/2 East Austin Street, Marshall, Texas, desires to receive catalogues and samples for his files. All his records were destroyed by fire.

Addison C. Berry, architect, has taken into partnership C. I. Botterton and M. R. Wainwright. The firm will practice architecture and engineering, with offices at 204 Ruff building, Hammond, Indiana.

A recent grouping of the Curtis interests in the lighting field combines the National X-Ray Reflector Company, the X-Ray Reflector Company, of New York, Inc., and Luminaire Studios, Inc., of New York and Chicago, under the new name of Curtis Lighting, Incorporated. The new Curtis Building at 1119 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, will provide increased engineering and manufacturing facilities and enlarged offices for the central headquarters of the new corporation.



The Dunham Thermostatic Radiator Trap, the first of its kind twenty years ago, and still the leader of them all.



Cover of the Dunham Thermostatic Radiator Trap removed to show operating member.



Body of the Dunham Radiator Trap.

Running through the trackless forest, and as plainly marked to the expert woodman as the main-traveled road, leads the blazed trail of the pioneer who first passed that way and left his mark to serve as a guide to those who follow him.

The trail is blazed
by the man ahead

IN industry, as in the forest, the trail is blazed by the man ahead.

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